

COURT ORDERS CHURCH TO VACATE PROPERTY

October 4, 2000 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org) - A federal judge has ordered the Indianapolis Baptist Temple to vacate its property by November 14 to pay off a \$6 million IRS tax lien. U.S. district Judge Sarah Evans Barker's order gives federal marshals authority to use force as necessary to complete the eviction (Indianapolis Star, Sept. 28, 2000). The Indianapolis Baptist Temple (Indianapolis, Indiana) does not recognize the government's authority to collect taxes from a church and has refused to pay the amount demanded by the Internal Revenue Service. In 1984 Pastor Greg Dixon ordained all church employees as ministers and refused to withhold income, Social Security, and Medicare taxes. The church was sued by the IRS, and a federal appeals court ruled against the church in August of this year.

While we believe the United States government is being unreasonable and heavy-handed in taking the property of a church for failure to pay taxes, we also believe that Christians should not be tax rebels. The Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles paid taxes even though the taxation was admittedly unrighteous (Matt. 17:24-27), and the books of Romans and 1 Peter instruct Christians to do the same (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:12-15).